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Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area News Release

1st Annual Boston Harbor Islands Sailing Regatta will showcase the Boston Harbor Islands national park area

Island Alliance Teams with Yachting Legend to Launch the Boston Harbor Islands Regatta

BOSTON, September 15 -- The Island Alliance announced today that it has teamed with Robert Johnstone (founder of the modern "J Boats") to launch the First Annual Boston Harbor Islands Regatta on October 1, 2005. More than 100 boats of widely different classes over 22 feet long are expected to race.

"The 34 Boston Harbor Islands are some of the most magnificent jewels of our harbor, yet their beauty remains undiscovered by many," said Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "This inaugural sailing regatta will draw residents and visitors to our waterfront and the islands, sparking a newfound appreciation for the wonders of our harbor."

The event is a "pursuit race" where the slowest boats start first with faster boats starting later. Theoretically, everyone finishes at the same time, so like the tortoise and the hare, a local community boating team that can hold its lead might just beat a world class racing yacht. The unique figure-eight course, starts at, passes, and then finishes in front of spectators off the Georges Island pier.

"What excites me most is the course," said Race Director Johnstone. "I've organized and raced in regattas world-wide, but have never seen a course as compelling for sailors and as accessible to spectators. The race has the three most important ingredients for a successful event: it's a benefit for a worthy cause, it's a pursuit race, and the course has beautiful islands to race around."

"Spectators will have the unique experience of being able to view the entire race from Fort Warren's civil war ramparts on Georges Island – an easy ferry ride from Boston's Long Wharf and Quincy's Fore River. With the backdrop of the city skyline, this

event promises to be memorable for participants and spectators alike," said Island Alliance President Tom Powers. The regatta is free to watch. Round-trip ferry tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$8 for children. Ferries will be departing every half hour from Long Wharf starting at 9 a.m.

The regatta kicks off Friday evening, September 30th with a Captain's Meeting & Reception at the Rowe's Wharf Pavilion, followed by a dinner for sponsors and participants at the Boston Harbor Hotel. On Saturday morning, sailors will race past several features of Boston Harbor that have gained notoriety over the past 400 years. The first loop passes Boston Light, America's first light station off the town of Hull. It then threads between a group of rocky outcroppings and the lonesome lighthouse known simply as The Graves before entering a historic passage called "The Narrows". The second, smaller loop skirts Hangmans Rock and rounds Rainsford Island where the city's immigrant quarantine hospital once stood. The race finishes back at Georges Island where it started.

"This Regatta has all the ingredients of another great Boston tradition in the making, much like the Boston Marathon. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is pleased to be a partner, and any resident of the Commonwealth, whether they have a boat in this race or not, can use this as an opportunity to see first-hand the revitalization of Boston Harbor and how the investments in Georges Island have made it possible for DCR to act as host for this event," said Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Park Superintendent Bruce Jacobson noted, "We are charged with protecting the islands, while at the same time making them accessible to more people. We welcome the new visits by regatta participants and spectators for this October 1 event."

The Boston Harbor Islands national park area was established in 1996 and features 34 islands with 1,600 acres and 35 miles of undeveloped ocean shoreline all within 10 miles of downtown Boston. The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership is charged with preserving and protecting the island resource." For more information, call 617-223-8666 or visit **BostonIslands.com**.

Race sponsorship categories are offered to individuals and corporations to support the Island Alliance. The Island Alliance is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the awareness, preservation and use of the Harbor Islands. The Island Alliance sponsors free environmental educational programs and family activities on the Harbor Islands. Interested boaters or sponsors should visit **BostonIslands.com/regatta/** for more information or call 617-223-8326.

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